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ABSTRACT

This paper describes a workshop prepared and presented by the Business Administration Department of the University of Wisconsin-Eau Claire, that is designed to provide training in evaluating a European market for an American product and preparing a plan for marketing the product in Europe. It is noted that the program can work with both students from another country and with American students. The planning of the workshop is described, as are its components and its use of a teaching tool, the Coopers-Lybrand International Marketing Kit. Also provided are the workshop schedule, a discussion concerning the organization of the students into groups to facilitate learning, the use of role playing, and procedures for running the workshop. The workshop's flexibility for adaptation to other areas of business with many possible variations is noted. It is also pointed out that use of the kit has helped the students to network, develop cultural awareness, and grasp the considerations necessary to market a product internationally. (GLR)

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JOINT VENTURE MARKETING TRAINING:

DEVELOPING MARKETING PLANS

UTILIZING FOREIGN AND AMERICAN STUDENTS

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Joint Venture Marketing Training:

Developing Marketing Plans

Utilizing Foreign and American Students

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INTRODUCTION

In the late spring of 1990 the University of Wisconsin-Eau Claire Business Administration Department was informed by the University Center for International Education (CIE) that the University had contracted to host a group of 10-15 Belgian students from the Economische Hogeschool St.-Aloysius (EHSAL) for a fourteen day period in the summer of 1990. The CIE requested that the Business Administration Department and the Foreign Language Department cooperate in providing a fourteen day program for the Belgian students. The program was to include business and ESL (English as a Second Language) training.

The purpose of this paper is to describe the workshop prepared and presented by the Business Administration Department - a workshop designed to provide training in the evaluation of an European market for an American product and the preparation of a plan for marketing the product in Europe. This paper is presented in the hope that it may provide ideas and techniques useful to the reader in developing programs of a similar nature.

The Business Administration Department was fortunate to have

the opportunity to join American and Belgian students in a cooperative study effort. The general philosophy of the Department is to engage in providing services, educational facilities or programs to any foreign individual or group, other than enrolled students, only when there is some definite and direct benefit to its students or faculty. Thus it sought to develop a program that would benefit both Belgian and American students. The program that was developed will work with students from another country or, if necessary, with only American students.

The short notice provided to the Department created some problems for the Department. All of the experienced international staff had already committed themselves to be off campus during the summer. Other faculty members also had conflicts. The only faculty available to teach a workshop were a business law professor and a marketing instructor who, although heavily committed to teaching another class and to consulting for the summer, agreed to give some assistance in the classroom.

The Department is not heavily involved in producing workshops at anytime during the year. There were no materials, outlines, or formats developed for short term instruction. In addition, the level of business competence of the Belgian guests was unknown. Materials had to be acquired or developed that almost any person could handle comfortably.

After reviewing the schedule for the fourteen days the Belgians were to be at the University, it was apparent there

could be no more than six sessions of one to one and one-half hours for instruction. Something had to be selected that could be accomplished within the time available.

PLANNING THE WORKSHOP

Aware of the limitations, planning the workshop began. Available materials were inventoried. Following some searching the instructors discovered a very attractive teaching tool, the Coopers-Lybrand International Marketing Kit. After reviewing the Kit, a decision was made to utilize it and build the workshop around its format. The Kit proved to be a very valuable asset.

THE COOPERS-LYBRAND KIT

Coopers-Lybrand, one of the "Big Six" accounting firms, is heavily engaged in the development of international business. In pursuit of new business the firm has developed several effective marketing devices. Its International Marketing Starter Kit is one such devices, including the International Marketing Starter Kin.

The Kit, in an attractive light cardboard folder, consists of three separate, but complementary booklets within. The first booklet is labelled "1-IQ Test". It contains a three-part test designed to measure a company's "International Quotient". This booklet served as the basis for the session on the second day of the workshop. On that day the participants working in groups answered all of the questions in the three parts of the first

booklet.

Part A. "Do You Need to Go International?"

Part B. "Are You Ready to Go International?"

Part C. "Do You Know What is Involved in Going International?"

The questions were simple, yet pertinent. They could easily be answered in an hour and one-half session and they were an excellent medium to start a group discussing a project.

The second booklet in the Kit, titled "2-Workbook," contained the textual material. It presented a simple, well written overview of many of the considerations involved in "going international." The booklet is divided into four parts:

1. "Getting Ready-Planning for your Products, Markets, Budget, and Organization" - containing short descriptions of some considerations a company needs to make prepatory to going international.

2. "Choosing the Best International Option" - describing some alternative business structures and methods for internationalization.

3. "Getting to Market: Shipping, Financing, and Getting Through Customs and U.S. Trade Restrictions" - briefly explaining some of the mechanics of international trade.

4. "Tax Aspects: Maximizing Taxes to Maximize Profits" - discussing various tax considerations of an international operation.

This second booklet provided the primary reference for the participants. They read it prior to the third day of the workshop. It provided most of the information upon which they based their discussions. The groups used this reference in preparation of their checklists and reports.

The third booklet, "3-Master Checklist," provided the participants with the framework for the final reports to their colleagues. This booklet contained the same headings as the second booklet, the workbook. The groups were directed to complete the questions in the checklist as thoroughly as possible and to incorporate their answers into their reports. This they did without difficulty.

Overall the "International Starter Kit" is extremely well designed, attractively presented, and capable of effectively guiding one through the early stages of international market planning. The Kit's developers deserve praise for their work. The Kit provides an excellent example of a comprehensive teaching and learning device which could serve as a model for similar efforts in other business areas.

ORGANIZING STUDENT GROUPS

Since the Coopers-Lybrand kit is designed to assist a business in analyzing its own export potential it was ideally suited as a device for self-instruction. Because the available faculty had limited time, and less expertise in international marketing, it was decided to let the students educate themselves,

to adopt role-playing and group self-instruction as the basic educational approach.

The students were divided into six groups. Whenever possible each group consisted of at least two American students and two to four Belgians. This kept the groups at a manageable size, yet prevented any anxiety a student might have from being the only member of their country in the group.

The group approach had the additional advantage of bringing American students into the workshop thereby allowing the Department to remain faithful to its general philosophy. However, there was concern that there might be some difficulty getting American students to participate in the workshop. The summer session meant a reduced number of students on campus and there was little time to recruit them. Some students would come from the marketing instructor's class; the rest of the participants were expected to be other business students. Since the Americans were volunteers, they would receive no University credit and they would have to expend some effort to prepare for the workshop. As it later turned out there was no difficulty getting volunteers. Interestingly, several volunteers came from non-business backgrounds. They did almost as well in the workshop as did the business students.

ROLE PLAYING

The Belgians were told that they were to assume that they had recently been employed by a European firm. Their employers

had called them in, informed them that the company had just entered into a joint venture with a company located in Eau Claire and that they were to fly to Eau Claire. There they would meet with their American counterparts for the purpose of evaluating the American's product and developing a plan for marketing the product in Europe.

The American students were instructed that they were to play the role of the American company's representative. The Americans were also told that they were responsible for selecting the company they wished to represent. They were encouraged to select a real Eau Claire company, preferably located in Eau Claire or its immediate surroundings. They were, however, to be allowed to select a completely fictitious company and product if they desired to do so.

The Americans were instructed to learn as much as they could about the company and product they selected. They were encouraged to contact the company, visit it, and discuss the project with a company representative if it was possible for them to do so.

The goal was to make the Americans as credible as possible in the short time available.

It should be stressed that it is important that the American students review the Kit prior to the workshop. This is particularly important with respect to the first booklet in the Kit.

After the American students were instructed in the process

and procedures two more sessions were scheduled with them. In the first the Coopers-Lybrand Kit was reviewed with them so they would be familiar with the type of information they had to have. Later, before the Belgians arrived, another meeting was held with the Americans to review their progress and answer questions. During the second session the Americans were instructed that if they needed a fact they didn't have or if they felt it would help the role they played they should feel free to supply the fact, ie., fabricate it.

THE WORKSHOP SCHEDULE

A six day workshop schedule was prepared:

Day 1-Introduction of the workshop members and faculty.
Introduction of the Coopers-Lybrand Kit.
Explanation of the roles to be played.
Group formation.
Group review of Kit.

Day 2-Group Preparation of Part 1 of the Kit.

Day 3-Group Preparation of Parts 2 and 3.

Day 4-Complete Part 3 and prepare for reports to workshop.

Day 5-Three 1/2 hour group reports - questions and discussion by workshop instructors and members.
Proceedings videotaped.

Day 6-Three 1/2 hour group reports - same as Day 5, Conclusion.

RUNNING THE WORKSHOP

On the first day, after some introductory remarks, the instructors described the roles the Americans and Belgians were to play. The Kit and the schedule were explained and the students were formed into groups. Whenever possible, a Belgian who expressed an interest in a particular company or product was assigned to that group. The students spent the remainder of the time in their groups.

An instructor opened the second session by answering questions and briefly lecturing on joint ventures. After about fifteen minutes the students commenced working in their groups. From then on, no formal instruction was given. The instructors in the workshop sessions was to act as facilitators and reference persons. The two instructors circulated between the groups, in some cases taking the role of a senior company officer checking on the group's progress, asking pointed questions whenever possible. At other times, the instructors served as a reference sources, answering questions. Generally if an instructor approached a group he or she would take the role of a company officer; if a group sought them out, they would act as an advisor or resource person. For the most part, the students were able to follow the Kit without difficulty. Instructors were rarely called upon to answer questions.

If an instructor approached a group in the role of senior officer the group usually responded in the roles assigned to them. Role-playing seemed comfortable for all when it appeared

the instructor wanted to use it. When left alone, however, the groups usually did not engage in serious role-playing. They seemed comfortable exchanging information and working together without the need for any artificiality.

The last two days of the workshop involved presentations of the group's findings. Each group was given 1/2 hour for its presentation. At the end of each presentation time was allowed for questions and discussion involving the rest of the participants and the instructors.

Each presentation was videotaped. The tapes were reviewed by the groups at a party held on the last day of the workshop. The purposes for videotaping were:

1. To provide an opportunity for the students to review their own performance.
2. To provide a visual record for later faculty review and use.
3. To allow the department to present tapes to participating businesses, encouraging them to participate again.
4. To allow presentation of a tape to Coopers-Lybrand illustrating the results of the use of their Kit.
5. To give to the Belgians to show in Belgium.

CONCLUSION - WHAT WAS LEARNED, WHAT WAS GAINED

The general conclusion of all concerned was that the student presentations were well done and comprehensively covered the

marketing problem assigned. The presenters were organized and knowledgeable. The Kits appeared to effectively lead the students through the problem, allowing them to understand and participate in a meaningful experience while they produced a creditable result.

Comments from both American and Belgian participants indicated that the workshop was successful. Several American students expressed interest in travel to Europe. One of them will travel to Brussels this summer where he will meet with some of the Belgians. After the course, two other Americans expressed renewed interest in becoming marketing majors. Several of the Americans in the group have maintained contact with their Belgian counterparts.

The Belgian reaction was equally positive. When they returned to Belgium they published an article in their school publication describing their experience. The Department has received inquiry about a workshop this summer. EHSAL has indicated a desire to send more students and faculty than they sent last year.

The program's success has led the department to explore its use in other areas. The format is very flexible and can be adopted in other areas with many possible variations. The scenario will work for finance, accounting, management, and marketing, as well as many other business or non-business areas. However, the importance of the Kit or something very similar to it should not be minimized. It was this well-constructed self-

educational medium that allowed instruction and group activity in a very short time frame. Without such a device the format would be difficult to use. This became especially apparent when it was learned that the students had voluntarily met outside of class to work on the project. Having the Kit to refer to was immensely helpful for them.

The scenario described provided several benefits.

1. Networking. Networking was described to the participants early in the workshop. Everyone was encouraged to build their relationships as permanent and on-going and to view their meetings as the beginning of a viable business contact.

2. Cultural Awareness. The students were required to describe and discuss marketing considerations for each other's culture. This increased their awareness of each other's culture.

3. International Marketing. The student presentations demonstrated that the students grasped the considerations necessary to market a product internationally.

THE FUTURE

The department intends to try to develop more workshops similar to the workshop described and will welcome an opportunity to produce the same program with groups from other countries. In addition, it will seek expansion of its relationship with EHSAL.

The next workshop may be in the management area. In that event, a subject will be selected that can be conducted within the same format. Consideration is being given to a problem

requiring the participants to plan for the transfer of two or three employees from America to Europe. This will require the participants to consider many practical cultural considerations and to share information on America and Europe.

The department is pleased that, as the result of its initial success, inquiries about a similar program in Brussels have been received. It will explore the possibility of starting a workshop at UWEC, then moving the entire group to Brussels for another two weeks.

The department is considering continuing to develop scenarios around the same companies, examining different problems in different areas each time, and is considering the addition of a company representative to each team. This will add a degree of realism to the exercise.

It is hoped that this paper will suggest means and methods which the reader may find useful in their own circumstances. What has been done works at UWEC. It will work for you.